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Assistance in mine action

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, covering the period from August 2009 to July 2011, is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/84, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the implementation of that resolution and on follow-up to previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and mine action, including on relevant United Nations policies and activities.

2. The report stresses the impact of mine action in the five major areas of United Nations work, namely peace and security; humanitarian affairs; economic development; human rights and international law, and describes the efforts of the United Nations Mine Action Team (consisting of 12 United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes,[1] including, as observer entities, the Office of Legal Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the World Bank and the International Committee of the Red Cross) to integrate mine action in all five areas. The report begins with an update on efforts to promote the universalization and implementation of international legal instruments related to mine action, with key developments, including the adoption of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 to support enhanced implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel

* A/66/150.

[1] The 12 entities are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

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Mines and on Their Destruction (the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010, and the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in Vientiane from 9 to 12 November 2010.

3. The report highlights efforts to integrate mine action into United Nations peacekeeping operations and humanitarian and development programming and provides an overview of the coordination and rapid response mechanisms developed to address the threats of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including obsolete and degraded ammunition stockpiles and improvised explosive devices. In addition, the report notes that mine action is based on effective partnerships within the United Nations as well as between the Organization, its Member States and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals.

4. The report also outlines the achievements made since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/64/287) in the implementation of the four strategic objectives identified in the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010. In recognition of the evolving mine action landscape, the report outlines a series of recommendations, including enhanced cooperation among United Nations mine action partners in the area of ammunition stockpile management, to address the increased threats posed by improvised explosive devices and the vast circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons.

II. Update on international instruments related to mine action

5. The United Nations continued to assist Member States in the development and implementation of international instruments aimed at protecting civilians from the scourge of landmines and explosive remnants of war. To date, 156 countries have ratified or acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention since it opened for signature in 1997. Eighty-six States parties have completed their stockpile destruction obligations, collectively destroying over 45 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines. In 2009 and 2010, Albania, Greece, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Tunisia and Zambia declared that they had completed their clearance obligations. Ten States parties which were unable to clear and destroy their anti-personnel mines within the 10-year deadline requested extensions of the deadline.

6. The Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction took place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 30 November to 4 December 2009. The Conference, entitled "The Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World", reviewed progress made and focused on the remaining challenges for States parties and other partners in achieving full compliance with the Convention. The Conference adopted the Cartagena Declaration ("A shared commitment for a mine-free world") and the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014, which provide guidance and a framework for the implementation and universalization of the Convention in the coming years.

7. The Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, held in Geneva from 29 November to 3 December 2010, reviewed the intersessional work programme for 2011 and established a new Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance. The meeting also endorsed the report of the special task force set up at the Second Review Conference to evaluate the

Implementation Support Unit at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (ISU), adopting changes that would increase the independence and performance of the Unit under the direct guidance of States parties. States parties also welcomed the Geneva progress report on the status and operation of the Convention since the Second Review Conference.

8. Since it opened for signature in December 2008, 109 countries have signed or acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, including 38 countries that have used, produced, exported or stockpiled cluster munitions. Following the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification on 16 February 2010, the Convention entered into force on 1 August 2010. As at 8 July 2011, the Convention had been ratified, accepted or acceded to by 59 countries.

9. Nine States parties (Austria, Belgium, Ecuador, Hungary, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and Spain) and two signatories (Colombia and the Czech Republic) have completed destruction of their stockpiles of cluster munitions. In 2010, two signatories (Afghanistan and Angola) reported that their stocks of cluster munitions had been destroyed as part of broader weapons disposal programmes. All States parties with stockpiles of such weapons indicated that they have either begun their physical destruction or are in the process of doing so, and 10 countries have enacted national legislation to implement the Convention.

10. The First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions was held in Vientiane from 9 to 12 November 2010. The fact that Albania is serving as President of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, coupled with the Presidency of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, reflects a promising trend towards increased ownership by affected States over the humanitarian disarmament conventions. Following the current presidencies, Lebanon will serve as President of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in September 2011, and Cambodia will serve as President of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in November 2011.

11. The Vientiane Declaration and Vientiane Action Plan adopted at the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions will guide the implementation of the Convention. States parties adopted national reporting formats for their reports under article 7 of the Convention regarding transparency measures. A work programme for 2011 was approved, including provisions for an intersessional meeting in 2011 to discuss the future architecture and implementation framework of the Convention. The Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided substantive and logistical support to the Lao People's Democratic Republic in advance of the First Meeting. At the meeting, UNDP was appointed Executive Coordinator, under the Lao Presidency, with responsibility for the preparations for the Second Meeting of States Parties, including the organization of an intersessional meeting in Geneva from 27 to 30 June 2011, in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

12. Within the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, commonly known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the group of governmental experts continued negotiations on a protocol on cluster munitions. The United Nations Mine Action

Team actively engaged with delegations and provided technical inputs to their deliberations. The United Nations Mine Action Team also provided technical advice to the 2010 intersessional expert meetings of States parties to amended Protocol II on mines, booby traps and other devices, and Protocol V on explosive remnants of war of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which focused, respectively, on improvised explosive devices and the implementation of Protocol V, including its plan of action on victim assistance.

13. Since my last report, 102 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and 62 have adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The United Nations Mine Action Team continued to encourage Member States to accede to the Convention, stressing its relevance in addressing the rights and needs of victims of mines and explosive remnants of war. At the programme level, opportunities were identified to integrate assistance to mine and explosive remnants of war victims into broader public health and support frameworks.

III. Mine action response within the United Nations and outside

14. The mine action landscape continued to evolve over the past two years. Further progress was made towards meeting the strategic objectives set out in the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010, and some national mine action programmes reached completion. A case in point is Albania, which, having finished demining in 2009, is now working to transform its mine action programme to support the Government's demilitarization programme, which includes ammunition stockpile management and the disposal of obsolete and degraded ammunition. A number of other countries also have begun to explore potential synergies between mine action and other sectors, recognizing that the tools and expertise developed to respond to the threat of landmines may be effective in addressing other threats, such as those posed by degraded and poorly managed ammunition stockpiles and improvised explosive devices.

15. Nevertheless, several countries, including Afghanistan, Cambodia and the Sudan, remain severely affected by landmines. It is also worrisome that in some places, for example Colombia, new mines are being laid while existing landmines are being removed. The use of anti-personnel mines by non-State actors was also confirmed in Afghanistan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen. In response to the threat posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war, the United Nations continued to implement various mine action programmes in support of the efforts of national authorities. The support of the United Nations has been critical to the provision and coordination of the mine action response during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict, notably in Pakistan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as to the development of capacities and mechanisms to ensure that the mine action response is provided in the most effective way.

16. In its resolution 64/84, "Assistance in mine action", the General Assembly identified "the need for a comprehensive and independent evaluation of the scope, organization, effectiveness and approach of the work of the United Nations in mine action". After extensive consultations, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action agreed that the Joint Inspection Unit would undertake the evaluation.

The United Nations Mine Action Team supported the evaluation of the Joint Inspection Unit, including the allocation of funding for it from the Voluntary Trust Fund.

A. Integrating mine action in the United Nations system

17. During the reporting period, increased focus was placed on integrating mine action within United Nations peacekeeping, humanitarian and development efforts. Mine action is a growing component of peacekeeping and special political missions, based on explicit reference to mine action in mission mandates or through contributions to the protection of civilians and the safe conduct of other mandated activities. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT, closed on 31 December 2010), the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS, closed on 9 July 2011), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS, established on 9 July 2011) and the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (UNSOA) all had mine action components.

18. Mine action and problems related to explosive remnants of war, stockpile management and improvised explosive devices have been referenced in reports to the Security Council, in particular those addressing the situation in countries where peacekeeping operations or special political missions are or have been deployed. These include my reports on Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal, Somalia, the Sudan (including Darfur), the Syrian Arab Republic and Western Sahara. Elements on mine action were also included in a number of thematic reports, including reports on women and peace and security; children and armed conflict; the protection of civilians in armed conflict; and peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict. In my report on children in armed conflict (S/2010/181), I highlighted the fact that, during the reporting period, more than 1,000 children were confirmed to have been killed or injured in conflict-related violence, victims, inter alia, of mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. In response to the threat posed to children by such weapons, in 2010, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) integrated mine and explosive remnants of war risk education and advocacy against the use of landmines and other indiscriminate weapons into its "Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies", a framework that guides the UNICEF response to emergency situations.

19. Continued efforts were made to include mine action in United Nations humanitarian and development plans as well as consolidated appeals processes. Mine action projects were included in the humanitarian appeals for Afghanistan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Somalia and the Sudan. Mine action was further included in the humanitarian response to the crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, with a mine action sub-cluster established under the protection cluster and five mine action projects included in the revised flash appeal launched by the Emergency Relief Coordinator in May 2011. The United Nations and

bilateral, multilateral and civil society development agencies also began to integrate mine action into their programmes, as a sector of development in itself and as a means of advancing work in more traditional development sectors.

20. In order to further promote gender equality in mine action, the United Nations revised the "Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes" through the sharing of good practices and lessons learned from field programmes. The revised guidelines identify measures to be implemented in mine action programmes in order to balance the participation of women and men as beneficiaries, practitioners and decision makers and to ensure that mine action projects have an equally proportionate impact on women and girls, boys and men.

B. Coordination and partnerships

21. United Nations departments, offices, programmes, funds and agencies involved in mine action continued to coordinate their activities through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, in accordance with "Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Inter-Agency Policy".

22. Following a review of existing mechanisms for the coordination of mine action, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action agreed in October 2010 that the mine action area of responsibility within the global protection cluster should be fully activated in order to: align the coordination of mine action with the accepted cluster approach throughout the United Nations system; facilitate coordination with a broader group of stakeholders (for example, non-governmental organizations); and ensure a direct link with United Nations country teams. In coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which leads the Global Protection Cluster, the United Nations Mine Action Service drafted terms of reference for the mine action area of responsibility that were adopted by the membership, which includes the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other partners.

23. In order to promote coordination with non-governmental organizations and other implementing partners, the United Nations Mine Action Service chaired meetings of the Committee on Mine Action on the margins of the thirteenth and fourteenth International Meetings of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers, held in Geneva in March 2010 and 2011 to discuss issues of common concern. The group also met during the intersessional meetings on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, held in Geneva in June 2011.

24. In recognition of the complementarity between mine action and work to curb the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, efforts have been made to ensure coherence and synergies among the two processes within the United Nations. Examples of these include the participation of members of the United Nations Mine Action Team in the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism, chaired by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the provision of technical expertise by the United Nations Mine Action Team to the development of the International Small Arms Control Standards, for which the International Mine Action Standards served as a model.

25. The Office for Disarmament Affairs, together with the United Nations Mine Action Service, continued to develop the international ammunition technical guidelines, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/51, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to contribute to the development of technical guidelines to assist countries, on a voluntary basis, to improve their national stockpile management capacity, prevent the growth of surpluses and address wider risk mitigation. The United Nations delivered a well-received presentation on the guidelines at the second General Assembly of the Latin American Association of Peacekeeping Operations Training Centres, held in Rio de Janeiro in August 2010. I welcome the continued development of the guidelines by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, in partnership with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others, which is critical to avoid explosive remnants of war contamination created by unintended explosions.

26. During the reporting period, I called on the Department of Safety and Security to coordinate the development of a comprehensive policy on the United Nations approach to improvised explosive devices that are part of active hostilities and that threaten personnel and facilities of the Organization. In view of the similarities between the threat of landmines and that of improvised explosive devices, I recommended that the experiences of the members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action be taken into account in the development of the aforementioned policy, which is expected to be presented to the Steering Group of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network in late 2011.

C. Servicing the mine action community

27. In 2009, in recognition of the critical role that can be played by standing capacities in the planning and start-up of missions, the United Nations Mine Action Service established its Standing Mine Action Capacity mechanism. Since its establishment, the mechanism has been deployed to provide immediate response to emergency situations, reinforce existing programmes and conduct needs assessments and programme evaluations. Most recently, in March 2011, the United Nations Mine Action Service deployed its personnel assigned to the mechanism to Cairo to coordinate the mine action response to the crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and to establish the mine action area of responsibility under the protection cluster.

28. The post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire left a trail of explosive remnants of war, which posed a direct threat to human security and prevented the Government and humanitarian and development actors from safely pursuing reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts. In response to that threat, on 14 April 2011, the United Nations Mine Action Service deployed a technical expert to Côte d'Ivoire to assess the scope and nature of contamination in Abidjan and to identify the requirements for clearance of priority hazardous areas in support of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and other stakeholders, including national authorities. In future, the discovery of ammunition stockpiles and arms caches, in Abidjan and beyond, will require the implementation of ammunition and weapons management projects in support of national security institutions. In this connection, the Mine Action Service has begun to assist UNOCI to address ammunitions and weapons management in support of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and its security sector reform efforts.

29. At the request of my Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), the United Nations Mine Action Service conducted technical assessment missions to Guinea-Bissau from 24 to 28 May 2010 and from 13 to 19 February 2011. The 2010 mission undertook a preliminary assessment of existing ammunition storage, management and destruction capacities to assist Guinea-Bissau in addressing its surplus ammunition stockpile. The follow-on mission focused on reducing the immediate hazard and laying the foundations for a longer-term ammunition management regime, in accordance with the international ammunition technical guidelines currently under development.

30. The United Nations Mine Action Service, in conjunction with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, held its seventh and eighth annual rapid response exercises in Sweden in June 2010 and 2011. As in previous years, the exercises focused on establishing a mine action coordination centre in an emergency environment. The annual exercise is included in the workplan of the global protection cluster, and a number of member agencies send staff to the exercise to enhance future responses.

31. The development and maintenance of International Mine Action Standards continued to be an essential element of United Nations support to the mine action community. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining assists the United Nations Mine Action Service to manage the annual review process, in order to ensure that the Mine Action Standards maintain their relevance. Amendments have been made to all of the Mine Action Standards, including recognition of issues related to cluster munitions. In addition, in 2010, the International Mine Action Standards Review Board approved a new standard, developed by UNICEF, on mines and explosive remnants of war risk education, which replaced seven existing standards on mine risk education.

32. As noted above, the thirteenth and fourteenth International Meetings of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers were held in Geneva in March 2010 and 2011. Organized by the United Nations Mine Action Team in partnership with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the annual meetings provide an opportunity for up to 300 mine action practitioners to assess progress achieved and future challenges in the sector. It is encouraging that national directors took an increased role in chairing and facilitating the meetings.

33. From 6 to 8 September 2010, the United Nations Mine Action Service, in coordination with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, hosted the third mine action technology workshop in Geneva entitled "Merging mine action technology and methodology". This biannual event brings together mine action practitioners, equipment manufacturers and research and development organizations to review current technology and future needs. The workshop focused on the use of satellite and aerial imagery along with remote analysis and sensing technology to identify mined areas.

34. During the reporting period, UNDP continued to promote South-South cooperation through its Mine Action Exchange Programme, which facilitates cooperation and peer review among affected countries and the dissemination of good practices. In 2010, initiatives undertaken under the programme included

exchanges of information and experience among the mine action programmes of Angola, Cambodia and Mozambique.

D. Resource mobilization/allocation

35. According to the Landmine and Cluster Munitions Monitor (an initiative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines), around $1 billion was generated in support of mine action efforts between 2009 and 2011, confirming that funding levels remained stable in spite of the global financial crisis. The vast majority of funds were directed to a relatively small number of States and territories, however, and primarily allocated to mine clearance, which is but one of the five pillars of mine action (also including mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and advocacy).

36. From 1 August 2009 to 8 July 2011, contributions to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action totalled $172 million, benefiting 21 affected States and territories. In addition, peacekeeping assessed funds for mine action totalled over $161 million for the period from 1 July 2009 through 30 June 2011. Troop-contributing countries also provided in-kind mine action capacity in direct support of mission mandates.

37. Between 2009 and 2010, donor funding through the UNDP Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and UNDP country offices totalling $80 million supported 28 national mine action programmes. During the same period, over $25 million was provided to UNICEF for its mine action support to over 10 countries and territories.

38. The United Nations Mine Action Team continued to assist the Mine Action Support Group, a forum of donors providing political and financial support to mine action activities. Under the chairmanship of the United States of America, the Support Group held its annual meeting in New York on 14 October 2010, with 37 members in attendance. For the first time, participants included representatives from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, reflecting the increasing pool of donors with an interest in mine action. The Group also met in Geneva on 10 May 2011 to address the mine action requirements for the crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which I welcome as a positive development for donor coordination in the area of mine action.

39. On 30 November 2009, the United Nations organized the launch of the *Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2010* in Cartagena, to coincide with the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. An annual publication, the portfolio provides an overview of how affected countries plan to address problems posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war, in partnership with the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other actors at the local, national and international levels. In 2010, the United Nations organized a review of the *Portfolio of Mine Action Projects* process. Based on the outcome of the review process, a new methodology and templates are being developed, aimed at increasing the use of the portfolio as a reference by mine action donors in making decisions about allocation of resources. The *Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2011*, which includes 238 projects covering all five pillars of mine action, was launched online on 18 March 2011.

IV. Implementation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010

40. In order to measure the implementation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010, the United Nations Mine Action Team distributed a survey to 49 mine action programmes that had received its support. Preliminary results underscored the decreasing rate of civilian deaths and injuries, the positive correlation between mine action and enhanced humanitarian and development responses, the integration of mine action into national development and reconstruction plans and the establishment of national mine action authorities. By identifying successes and gaps, the survey results will inform the strategic objectives of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy 2011-2015. A list of progress and achievements during the reporting period is presented below.

A. Strategic objective 1: Reduction of death and injury by at least 50 per cent

41. Statistics from several countries reflect a noticeable reduction of death and injury due to landmines and other explosive remnants of war. In 2010, Afghanistan averaged 33 casualties per month (26 per cent from landmines and 74 per cent from unexploded ordnance), representing a 29 per cent decrease from 2009. Of the victims, 16 per cent were female, and 65 per cent were children, with boys between the ages of 7 to 14 accounting for 55 per cent of all victims under the age of 18. Similarly in Chad, victim surveillance reported a reduction in reported casualties from 51 in 2009 to 17 in 2010.

42. In Gaza, the United Nations Mine Action Team provided life-saving interventions in the aftermath of "Operation cast lead", creating a safer environment for the civilian population and humanitarian delivery. The mine action programme conducted risk assessments of 2,187 sites, including housing sites, which were estimated to benefit 80,132 persons, and provided risk education to 5,426 individuals. Civilian casualties fell from 39 in 2009 to 16 in 2010, a 41 per cent decrease.

43. In Nepal, United Nations support to the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction in developing and implementing a national mine action strategy contributed to a further decrease in casualties. Available data for 2010 revealed 43 victims of mines and explosive remnants of war, representing a 39 per cent decrease over 2009. The data indicated that the majority of victims were under 18 years of age and that they were injured by victim-activated improvised explosive devices.

44. In the Somaliland and Puntland regions of Somalia, enhanced coordination and clearance capacity contributed to reducing civilian casualties and enabling development activities. In south central Somalia, increased monitoring of accidents resulted in significant improvements in prioritization and targeting for mine action implementers. Risk education was prioritized in central Somalia, which helped prevent death and injury among migrants escaping clashes in the south of the country. Mogadishu and the Afgoye corridor were especially targeted owing to high levels of contamination and casualty rates in these densely populated areas. The United Nations Mine Action Service provided risk education to 361,843 Somalis in central Somalia, the Afgoye corridor and Mogadishu and established a local

identification and disposal capacity in three of the most densely populated and mine-affected regions in the south.

45. In a notable development, the United Nations Mine Action Service, as part of UNSOA, began to work with AMISOM to increase the awareness of mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices among the troops and to improve their ability to undertake explosive ordnance disposal operations safely and efficiently. In October 2009, with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service, AMISOM began the disposal of explosive remnants of war in Mogadishu. By April 2011, it had destroyed 5,591 mines, explosive remnants of war and items of small arms ammunitions. Systematic baseline surveys were conducted for the first time in districts of Mogadishu, giving a view of the pervasiveness of contamination in areas accessible to humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, new mine use has been reported in several areas where armed opposition groups have reportedly mined key roads and strategic arteries. It must noted that eight Somali regions remain under the control of armed groups that have impeded clearance activities.

46. In Colombia, where non-State armed groups continue to use landmines and improvised explosive devices, the number of victims remains very high, with approximately two casualties reported daily. Nevertheless, the overall number of incidents has decreased in recent years, with 512 victims, 30 per cent of whom were civilian, reported in 2010, compared to 741 in 2009.

47. In the Sudan, the number of victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war increased by 35 per cent in 2010, although this may be partly explained by increased access to areas previously closed to civilians due to security concerns. In 2010, under the coordination of the United Nations Mine Action Office, a grouping of United Nations entities led by the United Nations Mine Action Service, with UNICEF as lead agency on risk education, the mine action community in the Sudan delivered community-based risk education to 330,015 people, with special focus on internally displaced persons and returnees.

48. Mines and unexploded ordnance continued to pose a serious threat to people in the conflict-affected governorates of Yemen, in particular children, who tend to be concentrated in high-risk areas or to mistake mines and unexploded ordnance for toys. In 2010, over 34 children died from mines and explosive remnants of war and 24 sustained serious injuries. Lack of access for mine clearance units was the main impediment to reducing risk in the affected areas. Following the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the Al-Houthi armed group in February 2010, UNICEF, in coordination with the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre and UNDP, initiated risk education activities, including three campaigns targeting over 28,000 people, training-of-trainers courses and the distribution of risk education material.

B. Strategic objective 2: Mitigate the risk to community livelihoods and expand freedom of movement for at least 80 per cent of the most seriously affected communities

49. Significant strides were made towards improving the livelihoods of those who face the socio-economic impact and restriction of movement because of landmines

and explosive remnants of war. In Cambodia, UNDP supported the work of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre in coordinating the restoration of 14 million square metres of contaminated land, destroying, in the process, 14,000 anti-personnel mines, 403 anti-tank mines and over 80,000 items of unexploded ordnance. Over 80,000 people are expected to have benefited from demining activities by gaining access to agricultural land, sources of irrigation, roads, health centres and other infrastructure. Nearly 2,000 students now have access to schools in areas that were demined.

50. In eastern Chad, the clearance of 2,500 kilometres of road, including 4,700,000 square metres of war-torn land and 212 dangerous areas, and the destruction of 21,000 explosive remnants of war and items of ammunition resulted in a reduced risk to host communities, refugees and internally displaced persons. Since, agricultural land represented 78 per cent of the land cleared, this action improved the livelihoods of thousands of people.

51. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Mine Action Office, with support from UNDP, continued to conduct mine clearance and risk education, further reducing the risks posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war. During the reporting period, 10,178,977 square metres of land were released for agricultural use and other economic activities, and risk education was provided to 94,815 community members.

52. Strides towards mitigating the risk to community livelihoods and expanding freedom of movement were also made in Iraq, with support from UNDP, increasing access to agriculture and schools. UNDP also continued to support clearance activities in Mozambique, where 136 areas previously blocked to economic development were cleared in 2010.

53. In the Sudan, significant progress was made to open roads, 96 per cent of which are now deemed safe. The opening of roads improved freedom of movement and facilitated the return of internally displaced persons and refugees as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Clearance operations have also resulted in the use of land for agricultural purposes and other development and income-generating activities.

54. In Western Sahara, increased resources have produced an improved programme performance, namely, the destruction of over 7,600 explosive remnants of war east of the berm and the creation of a significant reduction in the overall threat level in the highly contaminated areas of Mehaires and Tifariti. With priority being given to environmental conditions, the scarcity of resources and the need of nomads to access grazing land, the programme has had a positive impact on the local population, facilitating their access to wadis and water sources and promoting food security. Nevertheless, despite the above achievements, casualty rates within Western Sahara reportedly increased in 2010, highlighting the urgent need for risk education.

55. Elsewhere, progress has been hindered by a number of factors, including security concerns, gender issues and political considerations. For example, in Afghanistan, although clearance of over 189 square kilometres of land has led to improved access to roads and pasture lands, contamination levels remain high, with 6,545 known minefields, covering 627 square kilometres of land and impacting the lives and livelihoods of 2,056 communities, still to be cleared. A shift to

community-based demining, whereby Afghan demining experts train and mentor local community members to conduct clearance, has proved to be an effective way of operating in highly insecure parts of the country, which has also contributed to enhanced stability. Since my last report, over 1.7 million Afghans have received risk education, including 250,000 women and almost 500,000 girls. This figure is all the more remarkable since often times women cannot attend public risk education sessions, and female trainers who can reach women in their homes remain few. To address this challenge, a radio campaign is being launched, highlighting the importance of allowing girls to attend risk education sessions.

56. In 2010, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, verification and clearance took place on 7,637 kilometres of roads and 428,000 square metres of land, mainly in the eastern part of the country, and risk education was provided to 568,600 individuals. However, ongoing insecurity, adverse weather and reduced financial resources negatively impacted mine action operations. In addition, violence involving local militias resulted in new contamination around Mbandaka and Gemena airports in Equateur province. The presence or perception of landmines and explosive remnants of war continued to hinder livelihoods, free movement, access to basic services and markets and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. The danger posed by large, unmanaged stockpiles of ammunition in the country has already been highlighted in the final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2008/773). In response, the United Nations Mine Action Service within MONUSCO destroyed ammunition stocks, including over 50,000 small arms ammunition near Goma, in March 2010. To complement ongoing efforts by implementing partners, in February 2011, the United Nations Mine Action Service recruited a technical officer specialized in ammunition to work with the Congolese Armed Forces on eliminating the hazard posed by obsolete, degraded and poorly managed stocks.

C. Strategic objective 3: Integration of mine action needs into national development and reconstruction plans and budgets in at least 15 countries

57. During the reporting period, the United Nations worked with national counterparts to promote the integration of mine action into national development and reconstruction plans. The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan, managed by the United Nations Mine Action Service at the request of the Government, worked with a range of ministries to ensure the integration of mine action into wider development plans. The Centre also worked to ensure that mine action operations are in line with Government objectives, as outlined in the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghan National Development Strategy.

58. With support from UNDP, the National Mine Action Coordination Centre of Guinea-Bissau highlighted the need for integration of mine action into the national development strategy. A national mine action plan has been developed, in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

59. Until the peacekeeping operation closed on 31 December 2010, the United Nations Mine Action Service within MINURCAT supported the development of the Chadian national mine action strategy and action plan, which is based on the obligations of the Government of Chad under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban

Convention and the socio-economic and humanitarian needs of communities. UNDP assisted the national mine action authorities in revising the national mine action plan to take account of the results of an ongoing technical survey aimed at clarifying the extent of contamination.

60. In Iraq, the mine action strategy for 2010-2012 was approved and launched in early 2010, with support from UNDP. Iraq also has a national mine action plan that integrates mine action needs into national and local reconstruction and development plans.

61. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the unexploded ordnance sector is governed by a national strategic document that underlines the "strong correlation between poverty and food insecurity on the one hand, and the presence of unexploded ordnance, on the other". Based on that strategy, the Lao National Regulatory Authority, with support from UNDP, worked to ensure that the national socio-economic development plan for 2011-2015 refers to unexploded ordnance as a cross-cutting issue. In 2010, the Government introduced a ninth Millennium Goal — to reduce the impact of explosive remnants of war on development. In addition, a post-clearance impact assessment, facilitated by the Regulatory Authority, was completed in 2010 to obtain a better understanding of how clearance contributes to the Government's poverty reduction efforts.

62. In Mozambique, the national mine action plan (2008-2014) supports the national poverty reduction plan as a cross-cutting issue impacting development sectors. The challenge, however, is to ensure that all relevant ministries and local authorities take account of mine action issues in the development and implementation of their respective development plans. In Sri Lanka, integration with development plans takes place at the district level, where UNDP and UNICEF support the development of annual district mine action plans, specifying clearance, risk education and victim assistance priority activities, based on the national mine action strategy and in line with district development plans. More efforts are still required to ensure the integration of mine action needs into national development and reconstruction plans.

63. For the first time in 2010, the Somaliland Mine Action Centre in Somalia participated in the development of the Somaliland regional development plan. This and ongoing advocacy efforts with local authorities resulted in a financial contribution of $44,000 by the Government to the Centre in 2011. The Centre has also undertaken liaison with the regional administration to ensure the integration of mine action requirements in all development plans. In collaboration with UNDP and the United Nations Mine Action Service, mine action was included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Sudan for the period from 2009 to 2012 and the Sudan five-year strategy for the period from 2007 to 2012.

D. Strategic objective 4: Assist the development of national institutions to manage the landmine/explosive remnants of war threat, and at the same time prepare for residual capacity in at least 15 countries

64. During the reporting period, the United Nations worked with national mine action authorities in various countries to build local capacity and ensure national

ownership over mine action strategies and priorities. In Afghanistan, the Coordination Centre continued to work with the Department of Mine Clearance, in anticipation of the transfer of responsibility for planning and coordination of mine action activities from the former to the latter in 2013. As regards victim assistance, the Centre worked with the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled and the Ministry of Education to ensure the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors, are addressed and embedded into national structures.

65. UNDP provided further capacity development support to the Cambodian Mine Action Authority, including assistance in conducting a 2009 capacity assessment aimed at enhancing the Authority's ability to deliver against its mandate. Similarly in Chad, following the closure of MINURCAT at the end of 2010, the United Nations Mine Action Service continued to assist the national demining centre and its regional centre in Abeche in developing residual capacity, including through the training of 25 staff on the International Mine Action Standards.

66. In Colombia, following a decision enshrined in a national mine action bill adopted in December 2010 to allow civilian demining organizations to operate in the country, the Presidential programme for integrated mine action requested technical assistance from the United Nations Mine Action Service to develop an operational coordination system for civilian mine clearance that complements the ongoing assistance being provided by UNICEF and UNDP. The Mine Action Service supported the development of national guidelines and technical standards for mine clearance operations, as well as procedures for accreditation, quality assurance and information management.

67. Security Council resolution 1925 (2010), which established MONUSCO, mandated the Mission, inter alia, to "assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in enhancing its demining capacity". The United Nations Mine Action Service within MONUSCO supported the drafting and adoption of a national mine action law, endorsed by the National Assembly on 15 October 2010, which established a national mine action centre and stipulated the inclusion of provisions for mine action within the national budget. In Ethiopia, UNDP provided technical advice to the national authority in the development of a mine action plan, from July 2010 to December 2011, and supported the development of national mine action standards in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards.

68. The United Nations Mine Action Team continued to work closely with the Nepal Army Mine Action Coordination Centre to develop local capacity and meet its clearance obligations under the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In addition, the United Nations Mine Action Team continued to support the newly established mine action section within the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, including in developing and implementing a national mine action strategy and an annual workplan. In December 2010, UNICEF started to develop the section's mine risk education coordination capacity, with a view to starting the handover of responsibilities by December 2011. UNICEF also supported the prevention capacity of key governmental bodies, including the Department of Education, the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force, which now have the ability to deliver risk education in any of the 25 most affected districts. As a clear sign of the increased role of the national authorities in the coordination and implementation of mine action activities, in August 2010, the national mine action section began to lead the

Mine Action Joint Working Group, which it previously co-chaired with the United Nations Mine Action Team.

69. In 2010, the United Nations Mine Action Service in Somalia supported the establishment of an explosive ordnance disposal capacity within the Transitional Federal Government that has the potential to expand into all 10 regions in south central Somalia. Similar capacities established in Somaliland and Puntland provide an effective call-out service within the respective regions. These services are able to remove and destroy explosive remnants of war with limited support.

70. In Sri Lanka, a national mine action centre was formally established in 2010 to manage mine action activities. UNDP has been providing support to the centre through its regional mine action offices in Jaffna and Vavuniya, in order to promote implementation of Government mine action policies and activities, while UNICEF supports the national mine risk education and victim assistance efforts.

71. The United Nations also continued to support the further development of the National Mine Action Centre in Khartoum and the South Sudan Demining Authority. Since early 2010, the National Mine Action Centre has become increasingly proactive in all pillars of mine action. Since 2009, the South Sudan Demining Authority has increased joint operations with the United Nations Mine Action Office in the Sudan in field quality assurance and accreditation for clearance and mine risk education activities. In early 2011, the South Sudan Demining Authority also began to host monthly and quarterly mine action coordination meetings, with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service.

72. In Tajikistan, UNDP supported the development of a strategic plan for 2011-2015, ensuring a wide consultative approach, as well as the adoption of national mine action standards. UNDP also supported the development of a national mine action strategy in Thailand, which was submitted by the Thai Mine Action Centre for the approval of the Government in 2010.

V. Observations and recommendations

73. As noted above, mine action has an impact in all five major areas of the work of the United Nations. With regard to international law, the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention provided an opportunity for the United Nations, States parties and relevant partners to take stock of progress made towards a mine-free world and how best to address remaining challenges to the full implementation of the Convention. I welcome the adoption, at the Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014 and the Cartagena Declaration, and look forward to their implementation in the coming years. Another major development in this area was the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010 and the subsequent First Meeting of States Parties in Vientiane in November 2010, an important step towards eliminating those weapons. I encourage all Member States which have not yet done so to accede to the Convention, and to enact the national legislation to implement it effectively.

74. As regards the impact of mine action in the other four areas of the Organization's work, increased efforts at integrating mine action into United Nations peacekeeping operations as well as humanitarian and development

programmes reflect an increased awareness that mine action is critical to bringing about long-term peace and security, the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and respect for human rights. A prime example is the visit of the Acting Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service to Western Sahara in July 2011, at the request of my Personal Envoy, to further the constructive role of mine action in the ongoing talks.

75. In order to promote the positive impact of mine action, coordination and rapid response mechanisms have been enhanced. The area of responsibility within the global protection cluster has been fully activated, facilitating the coordination of mine action in response to the crisis in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in 2011. Member States also strengthened their coordination of mine action within the framework of the Mine Action Support Group, supported by the United Nations Mine Action Service, which now includes a wider membership and meets to address ad hoc crises. More can still be done to ensure that the United Nations provides the most effective response to the threat to peace and security, economic development and human rights posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war. In this regard, I welcome the ongoing evaluation of United Nations work in mine action by the Joint Inspection Unit and look forward to the report and its recommendations, which I trust will further strengthen our work in this area.

76. As noted above, the landscape in which the United Nations operates has evolved, with the threat posed by improvised explosive devices, obsolete, degraded and poorly managed ammunition stockpiles and the circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons on the rise even as the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war diminishes. I have encouraged continued cooperation among United Nations partners in the development of policies and instruments to respond to the aforementioned security threats, including at the country-level, in recognition of the added value of their respective contributions. In particular, I have directed the United Nations Mine Action Service to continue to work with other relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to address such issues, in view of the expertise and capacity that it has developed since its establishment in 1997.

77. Significant strides have been made in the field of mine action, including the establishment of concrete international norms and the application of proven solutions, however, this work is far from completed. It is essential not to overlook the continued threat posed by landmines. I am especially concerned by the continued landmine use reported in Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Yemen, and by the new mine usage reported in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Somalia and the Sudan in 2011, which show that gains made towards the elimination of landmines can easily be eroded. Most recently, credible reports indicate that new landmines have been laid in Southern Kordofan state in the Sudan and the contested Abyei area, where the United Nations is currently deploying a new peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). With the liquidation of UNMIS, the United Nations may be less able to address the threat of landmines in Southern Kordofan.

78. Given the persistent threat posed by landmines, further efforts are required before mine action can be removed from the international community's agenda. The United Nations will continue to assist the development and implementation of mine action programmes, in cooperation with national authorities and international partners. As noted above, a new United Nations Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy

for 2011-2015 is being developed, with refined objectives to better address outstanding challenges. In reaffirming the United Nations commitment to mine action, I call upon the international community to provide continued political and financial support for the elimination of landmines and explosive remnants of war. The continued threat posed by these weapons should not be underestimated, lest we pay a high price in terms of human lives, as well as undermine our collective efforts at promoting long-term peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

79. In closing, I pay tribute to all the deminers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, and condemn in the strongest terms all attacks against mine action personnel. Such attacks must be seen as attacks on the fundamental principles of peace, security and humanitarian assistance that lie at the very core of the work of the United Nations. In view of the highly insecure environments in which mine action personnel operate, I commend them for their continued dedication and commitment to providing life-saving services to vulnerable communities, regardless of political, religious, ethnic or geographical considerations.